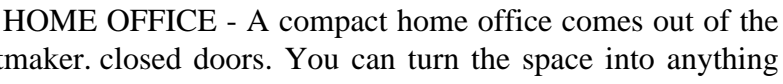


Decor Score: Office unit fits well in closet

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: We don't get much stay-over company. So I'm thinking we should do something with the guest room, like maybe turn it into an office. Would it make sense to take off the sliding closet doors and use that space for file cabinets and shelves?

A: Not only would it make sense, it could be downright inspired. If you don't need the hanging room, a double closet is too valuable to keep behind  HOME OFFICE - A compact home office comes out of the closet, literally. CNS Photo courtesy of Ken Gutmaker. closed doors. You can turn the space into anything from a sleeping alcove to the smart home office we show here. An idea borrowed from Wendy Jordan's ingenious book called "Making Room: Finding Space in Unexpected Places" (Taunton Press, \$19.95), it features four lateral files, stacked and slid into the former closet opening, then unified with a maple countertop.

Above that, a new maple center support holds glass shelving. The backs of the shelves are mirrored - Wendy suggests that you could also use corkboard - and the entire unit fits into the closet with just enough room to spare so it doesn't require new framing.

What's more, you will have the rest of the floor space for your desk and electronic - and maybe even a small sofa. Make it a convertible, just in case you do happen to have stay-over company in your future.

Q: The tile on our children's bathroom floor is a wreck and needs to be covered with a rug. What can you recommend that can stand up to three children splashing?

A: Go for the man-mades, specifically olefin and acrylic, which promise to resist water, mold and mildew. For example, Capel's Finesse collection (www.capelrugs.com) is designed for use outdoors, in nature's worst weather, so you can rest assured that these rugs are up to your kids' worst wear, tear and water.

Another product well worth investigating is Flor, indestructible modular carpeting made by Interface America, the smarties who originally invented it for heavy-duty use in offices and other commercial buildings. Flor is inexpensive, easy to install yourself as a wall-to-wall or area rug, and it comes in fun colors and different surface textures. There's even a Flor collection designed by Martha Stewart. To see more, click on www.flor.com.

Q: My son is 11 going on 18, as his father says. We need to redo his room, but he wants nothing but rap music posters on his wall. I know you're probably going to say, "It's his room, let him have what he wants." But we don't want to encourage him when it comes to that kind of music. Please suggest something kid-like that he might go for.

A: Well, since you've taken the words out of my mouth, let's talk about other bright, boyish and parent-pleasing ideas.

Like maps? I had great luck covering my (then-into-heavy-metal-music) son's bedroom wall, floor-to-ceiling, with a giant, antique-looking map of Europe in the mid-18th century. It was a special-order mural and came in sheets that made it easy to install.

You might find something comparable at a source such as www.usawallpaper.com/maps.

Or you could take the advice of designer Esther Sadowsky, who owns a New York firm called Charm & Whimsy: "Decorating for boys is very topical," she says. "What's hot in pop culture will affect certain design trends."

OK, so you already know rap is hot. The trick is to capture its funk and color but avoid literal representations like the posters you object to. Sadowsky thinks you can do just that with a decorative medium called "Wall-Pops," which are wall paper motifs like squares, circles, stripes that are peel-and-stick easy to apply in any configuration that pleases. If it doesn't, you simply peel the designs off the wall and reposition them until

you're happy. See for yourself at www.wall-pops.com.

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